

N^o 3

*The Duty of Giving Thanks for National
Deliverances.*

A
S E R M O N

Preach'd at
St. *Martin's* in OXFORD,
Before the
MAYOR AND CORPORATION,
On *Thursday, October 9th. 1746.*

Being the Day appointed to be kept as
a GENERAL THANKSGIVING to
ALMIGHTY GOD, for the Sup-
pression of the late REBELLION.

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of *Queen's College.*

Publish'd at the Request of the Mayor, Bayliffs,
and Commonalty of the CITY.

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PSALM CVII. I, 2.

*O give Thanks unto the LORD, for
He is Good; For His Mercy endureth
for Ever.*

*Let the Redeemed of the LORD say so;
Whom He hath redeemed from the
Hand of the Enemy.*

THE Goodness of Almighty God is that Attribute, on the Contemplation whereof our Thoughts, so long as we feel how much we stand in need of it, do most *delight to dwell*. To This we naturally have Recourse under the Apprehension of Danger, or the Pressure of Affliction. And thus far all is right. But the Misfortune is, *Deliverances vouchsafed* seldom make Impressions in any Degree proportion'd to the Ardency with which they were *implored*. The same Mouths, which in Time of Distress cou'd cry mightily unto GOD, are too often observ'd, upon Men's Enlargement from their Straits, to become unaccountably silent. They who, perhaps, have but just experienced the Goodness of the LORD, want to be put in Mind to give Thanks unto Him for it: Even the Redeemed of the LORD must be call'd upon to say, that His Mercy endureth for Ever.

Upon a Call of this Kind from our Superiors, We are now met together in the House of GOD; and have been offering up our devout Praises and Thanksgivings for a Deliverance *seasonably* and, if we will but do *our Part* in improving it, *happily* granted to This Church and Nation. And, certainly, if ever any People had a *just* Call to acknowledge and improve a Dispensation of Providence, such an one *We* of this Nation now have. *Many a Time has the same Right-Hand*, which at the Reformation *planted* that sound *Branch* of Religion, the Church establish'd in this Kingdom, graciously interposed in the Defence of it; sometimes in the Prevention of its Excision, when *That* seem'd unavoidable; and sometimes in its Restoration to Life and Vigour, when it had been actually *cut down*, and was apprehended to be irrecoverably *dry'd up and withered*. What Uses have been made of such Deliverances in Times past, I need not say: Nor will I presume to determine, how far our late Dangers might be occasion'd by the Unsuccessfulness of former Warnings. Be it *our Care*, as it is certainly our great Concern, *in This our Day*, to make a proper Improvement of this *last* Instance of GOD's Forbearance and Long-suffering. *a The Lord of the Vineyard*, notwithstanding any former Disappointments of his *just* Expectations from His *Fig-Tree*, hath *let it alone this Year also*: *If it bear Fruit, well; if not, we must not presume upon its being for ever suffered to cumber the Ground.*

He that *spared not the Natural Branches*; He that hath, for a Time at least and in Appearance, *cast off His own chosen People*; He that hath long since *removed His Candlestick* from the once enlighten'd Churches of *Asia*; may well be supposed ready, shou'd we *continue* to give Him the like Provocation, to *take away the Light* of His Gospel from *us* also, and transfer it to *some other Nation* that shall bring forth the *Fruits thereof*.

Far be it from me, however, to forebode Evil to my Country, especially on This auspicious Day. My Desire is to contribute my Endeavours towards *Lengthening its Tranquility*. And that, in Pursuance of the present Appointment, I may at once be an *Helper of Your Joy*, a Furtherer of Your Gratitude, and a Promoter of Your truest Interest; I have chosen to address You in the Words of my Text, "*O give Thanks unto the LORD, for He is Good; For His Mercy endureth for Ever: Let the Redeemed of the LORD say so; whom He hath redeemed from the Hand of the Enemy.*"

That beautiful Psalm, to which these Words are the Introduction, contains great Variety of Matter for Praise and Thanksgiving to Almighty God, consider'd as a *Deliverer in Times of Trouble*: I might add, that scarce is an Article of Danger therein specify'd, to which some Resemblance may not be observed in what the People of this Nation *lately* either felt or fear'd. On what Occasion this sacred Hymn was first composed, or to what Purposes it might afterwards be apply'd; does not certainly

tainly appear. That Part of it which immediately follows my Text, besides some Allusions in other Passages of it, seems most fitly to represent the Case of a People *brought back* to their own Land, after a State of Separation from it, and *Dispersion* over the several Quarters of the Earth. A Case, however, to which we need not *confine* the Words before us, nor the Duty therein recommended. If *Restoration* from a Captivity *already felt* calls for devout Joy and religious Exultation; surely the *Preservation* of those Comforts, which could otherwise at best have been *only regain'd*, may well inspire *the Redeemed of the LORD* with like Sentiments of Gratitude. The *Recovery* of any Good is not, in itself, a *more real* Blessing than the *continued Possession* of it. Nor can it be unsuitable to the *Psalmist's* Design, to exhort *Men* to *praise the LORD for his Goodness*, when He vouchsafes to *prevent* their Falling into *the Hand of an Enemy*, who might soon have dispossest them of their *Native Country*; or rather, whose Successes must probably have ended in so entire a Destruction of every thing valuable *in it*, as to render a *voluntary Exile* the most desirable Option left to all Good Men; in order to *seek* in some *strange Land*, what could no longer be enjoy'd in *their own*.

In the farther Application of the Words, then, to the Business of This Day, I shall from thence take Occasion, as fully as the Time will well allow, to consider and illustrate the following Particulars :

I. *First,*

- I. *First*, The *general Ground* on which the Duty of Thanksgiving for National Blessings, especially for Deliverances *from the Hand of the Enemy*, is founded.
- II. *Secondly*, The *particular Reasonableness* of the Duty on this Occasion; with a View to the late Situation and Circumstances of our Church and Nation. And,
- III. *Thirdly*, The *proper Manner* of expressing our Gratitude for such a Deliverance; And the Influence it ought to have on our future Conduct.

I. As to the *First*: The Duty of *Thanksgiving* for National Deliverances is, *in general*, manifestly founded on these Two plain Suppositions: --- "That *Benefits confer'd call for suitable Acknowledgments* to be paid to the Benefactor by the Receiver:" And --- "That *the supreme Benefactor, to whom Nations, as well as single Persons, stand indebted for the Benefits confer'd on them, and the Deliverances vouchsafed to them, is Almighty GOD.*" Suppositions so agreeable to our Natural Notions, so generally allow'd by the sober Part of Mankind; that they can need *very little*, will hardly admit of *any*, Illustration.

The Connection between *Favours confer'd* on one Part and *Gratitude due* on the other, is so *immediately* visible, that 'tis scarce possible by the Interposition of any other Consideration to render it more evident than it is *by itself*. If any Person can be *supposed* insensible

ble of it, after having ever done the lowest Office of Kindness to another ; We can only help his Apprehension by referring him to his *own Feeling* on such an Occasion ; bidding him ask his own Heart, "What *His* Expectations were from the Person he assisted and (as we not more usually than properly say) *obliged*."

And, "that God is the Great Benefactor, to whom all our Acknowledgments are *ultimately* due," is a Supposition equally certain with the former ; tho' more liable to be perplex'd by *the Disputer*, more apt to be overlook'd by the Politician, *of this World*. The great Governour of the Universe so generally acts by the Intervention of *subordinate Causes* ; so usually brings about His own Purposes without controlling the Powers which He originally gave them, or altering the Tendencies which He at first impressed upon them ; that we cannot ordinarily distinguish with Exactness between the Effects of His *general Concurrence* and of His *special Direction*. But then, neither is it at all *necessary* that we shou'd thus distinguish. Notwithstanding our Inability to explain the Nature of the Divine Superintendence, or to point out the Instances of His Interposition ; devout Applications for the Blessings we want, and grateful Acknowledgments for Those we have receiv'd, will still be *our reasonable Service* : so long as we are assured, that all Events are in God's Hand, and that *a He worketh all Things after the Counsel of His own Will*.

^a Eph. I. 11.

Whatever Efficiency the Author of Nature may have given to any Part of His own Workmanship; neither *Scripture* nor *sound Philosophy* will permit us to suppose, that He has put the supreme Management of the Whole out of His own Power. No. He who first *form'd*, must still continue to *uphold*, this great Machine of the Universe: The minutest Movement in it is continually subject to His Direction; and all its Parts incessantly *declare His Glory*, and *fulfil His Word*. And as to the *Moral World*: He, who is the ^a *GOD of the Spirits of all Flesh*; ^b *in whom they live, move, and have their Being*; must be perfectly acquainted with their several Powers, intimately present with all their Operations. *‘In His Hand are the Hearts of Men as the Rivers of Water; and He turneth them whithersoever He will.* Whether by direct internal Applications to them, or by disposing outward Circumstances for them, or by numberless other Methods unsearchable by us; He most easily can, and (we have Reason to think) continually does, *influence* their Counsels, where He does not *irresistibly force* their Wills: nay He can even *work* their jarring Humours, their interfering Designs, into a *Subserviency* to the great and good Purposes of His Providence. ^d *The LORD is King, be the People never so impatient.* He that ^e *stilleth the Raging of the Sea, and the Noise of its Waves*, can with the same Ease restrain *the Madness of the People*,

^a Numb. XVI. 22. ^b Acts XVII. 28. ^c Prov. XXI. 1.
^d Psal. XCIX. 1. ^e Ibid. LXV. 7.

and even so order Matters, that ^a *the Fierceness of Man shall turn to His Praise.*

All Events, then, not excepting Those which seem to happen most agreeably to (what we call) the *Natural Course* of Things, or to depend most on the *free Determinations* of Human Choice, are in the *last Result* to be ascribed to the *Direction*, or at least the *Permission*, of Almighty GOD. And if so, more especially applicable must this be to Those Events, on which the Fates of whole Kingdoms depend. If (as we are assured by unerring Wisdom) ^b *not a Sparrow falleth to the Ground without our Father* ; if those of His Creatures, which to us seem most inconsiderable, be yet by no means so inconsiderable as to escape His Notice or to be left out of His Protection ; His condescending Care, we may be sure, interests itself with *at least equal* Regard in Those Transactions, by the Issue whereof all that is valuable to large Societies of Men, the Liberties and Lives of Millions, and (what is of still more extensive Importance) the Continuance of *true Religion* to whole Countries or its Removal from them, may be finally decided. This is, indeed, an awful Subject ; and, from the Narrowness of our Views of Things, we must often be at a Loss to account for particular Appearances relating to it. But we have Reason to suppose, that States and Kingdoms are the great Scenes, on which *the LORD of the whole Earth* most usually displays the *Strength of His Arm*, and the Justice of His Administration.

^a Ps. LXXVI. 10. ^b Matth. X. 29.

Accordingly, numberless are the Instances, recorded both in sacred and profane History, of very surprizing Turns in the Affairs of Kingdoms, particularly *in the Day of Battle*. Here *the LORD of Hosts* seems more especially willing to convince Mankind, that ^a *there is no Restraint with Him to save by many or by few*. Not intending thereby to discourage the Use of the fittest Human Means of Defence; (*These* not only may, but ordinarily must, be both carefully provided and skilfully apply'd: (But to teach us the Folly of solely relying on such Means before-hand, and the Impiety of afterwards wholly ascribing our Deliverances to them. ^b *The Horse is prepared for the Day of Battle*; but still it must be acknowledged, that *Safety is of the LORD*. Activity and Vigilance are certainly commendable; but, ^c *except the LORD keep the City, the Watchman waketh but in vain*. ^d *Egypt may be sent to for Chariots and for Horsemen*; but, whilst Heaven withholds its Alliance, *the Strength of Pharaoh shall be your Shame, and the Trust in the Shadow of Egypt your Confusion*: And the most favourable Account to be given of such Auxiliaries will be, ^e *Their Strength is to sit still*.

When Men look back upon such Occurrences, They are usually very busy in tracing out, very forward in explaining, the Causes of the unforeseen Event: Ready on one Hand to charge the *Miscarriage* to some sudden *Panick* unaccountably spread thro' *the Host*; some

^a 1 Sam. XIV. 6. ^b Prov. XXI. 31. ^c Ps. CXXVII. 1.
^d If. XXX. 3. ^e Ver. 7.

Mistake of Orders in the inferior Officers; some Misunderstandings among their Leaders; or, perhaps, Cowardice in one and Treachery in another: Whilst, on the other, they are as ready to ascribe the *Glory* to the Firmness and Intrepidity of the victorious Army, and to the Skill and Bravery of their successful Commanders. Nor is it to be deny'd, but that very fair Presumptions may often appear to direct Men's Judgments in such Cases. And, as the Doctrine of God's Superintendence can by no means be pleaded in Excuse for those *bad Qualities* of particular Men, which He sometimes permits to *operate* for the Warning or Chastisement of a whole People: so neither does it detract from the Merit of those *Good* ones, by which He is sometimes pleased to save a Community from Destruction: The Thanks of a Community thus preserved are justly due to those Worthies of every Rank, who have not only in such an Exigency *a* *willingly offer'd themselves* to their King and their Country, but in the Article of Danger *b* *play'd the Men for their People and for the Cities of their GOD*. And, shou'd a Magnanimous Prince, upon the same *National Call*, eagerly fly from the enchanting Scenes, *c* *the soft Raiment, of them that are in King's Courts*, to *d* *the Battle of the Warriour with all its confused Noise and Garments rolled in Blood*; and, regardless of any Rigour of Season, any Inclemency of Climate, *e* *put his Life in his Hand*, on the truly

a Judg. V. 9. *b* 2 Sam. X. 25. *c* Luke VII. 25.
d Isai. IX. 5. *e* Judg. XII. 3.

interesting Occasion : We need not wonder, if *He*, under whose Conduct the important Conquest has been gain'd, shou'd be *the Man*, whom a grateful Nation *delighteth to honour*. But still—We must look *higher than the highest* upon Earth for the *supreme* Disposer of all Events, *the only Giver of Victory*. To Heaven shou'd our Praises be *principally* directed ; and there alone can they properly *terminate*. The most ^a *mighty Man of Valour* need not think it any Diminution of his Greatness to be consider'd as the *Honourable Instrument by whom the LORD hath given Deliverance unto His Country* : And the most illustrious Prince, far from being ashamed, may well be ambitious, of using the Acknowledgment of one of the greatest and most successful Warriours, King David himself,—^b *O GOD the LORD, Thou Strength of my Salvation ; Thou hast covered my Head in the Day of Battle*.

Let me only add, that tho' Nations (as well as single Persons) may, out of a presumptuous Affectation of appearing the *peculiar Favourites* of Heaven, sometimes be too forward, as well as at other Times too backward, in ascribing those Occurrences in which they are interested to the *special* Interposition of Providence : Yet *Circumstances*, no doubt, sometimes attend such Occurrences, not obscurely directing attentive Minds to the *Almighty Conductor* of them.—If, for instance, the Danger has arisen from seemingly small and almost imperceptible *Beginnings* ; growing, as in a Moment, from

^a 2 Kings V. 1. ^b Psal. CXL. 7.

an Object of general *Contempt*, into an Occasion of almost as general *Consternation* : If it has approach'd the People threaten'd by it *at a Time* when they were, *humanly* speaking, less than ever prepared to withstand it : If in its Progress the Authors of it have been permitted to *gain* Advantages against that People, considerable enough to *alarm* them, without *improving* those Advantages to their *Destruction* : — If, on the other Side, Succours have most seasonably arrived, sufficient to support the Spirits of an astonish'd Nation, but not yet to dispell their Fears : If, after this, human Preparations, in Appearance fully adequate to the Purposes intended, have been once and again unsuccessfully apply'd ; and ^a *the Men of Israel a second Time smitten before Benjamin* : In short, if, when *these last*, upon a *third* Engagement, were ready to say, "*They will certainly fall before us as at the first*", Victory has at length declared *decisively* in favour of *Israel* : — ^b *Whoso is wise will ponder these Things ; and will, both in the Danger and the Deliverance, understand and acknowledge the Loving-Kindness of the LORD.*

The Duty of *Thanksgiving* to Almighty God for National Deliverances, especially *from the Hand of the Enemy*, being by this Time (I hope) *in general* sufficiently establish'd : Tho' I doubt not but Your Thoughts are beforehand with me in the *Application* ; yet the Occasion, as well as my present Undertaking, calls upon me to consider a little farther,

^a See Judg. Ch. XX. ^b Psal. CVII. 43.

II. *Secondly, The Reasonableness of the Duty in our Particular Case ; from a View of the late Situation and Circumstances of this Church and Nation.*

Now the *Reasonableness of Gratitude* for any particular Deliverance may most naturally be made appear by considering the *Greatness* and Importance of that Deliverance ; as *This* again wou'd most forcibly be illustrated by taking an Estimate of those Evils, from which the Persons concerned have been rescued on such an Occasion. An Estimate, which we (of *this Part* of the Island at least) cannot in the present Instance, take with any Exactness ; because (blessed be GOD!) we were not left to the *Feeling* of them. But it may be of some Use to us, to carry our Imaginations backward to that Period of Time, when an Armed Force of Rebels was advancing towards us with a rapid Progress, and had with an amazing Swift-ness penetrated into the Heart of this Kingdom. Call to Mind, what Your Thoughts and Apprehensions were at that Juncture ; how hearty You were in Your Desires (I hope, I may say, how *servent* in Your *Prayers*) for such a Deliverance as the Gracious Disposer of all Events has since mercifully granted us. And let the Strength of Your *Fears*, and the Ardour of Your *Wishes* at that Time, be *some Measure* for Your *Joy* and *Thankfulness* on the present Occasion.

When the *late Rebellion* had very unnaturally begun to lift up its Head, had received some considerable

considerable Accessions, and gain'd some unexpected Advantages, in the *Northern* Part of these united Kingdoms; You may remember, I took Occasion ^a, from the *Royal Psalmist's* Example ^b, to recommend to You the great Duty of *Love to our Country*; with a View particularly to its *Peace* and *Tranquillity*; to its *Prosperity* and *Civil Interests*, including its *Laws* and *Government*; and lastly, to *the House of the LORD our GOD*, or its establish'd Religion and Ecclesiastical Constitution: And by representing, at the same Time, the Danger *then* threat'ning our *Jerusalem* in regard to each of these important Articles; I endeavour'd to excite You to *Pray for it's Peace*, and by all proper Means in Your respective Stations and Capacities to *seek its Good*. And, I presume, it may be no unserviceable Method of stirring up our Gratitude *at present*, briefly to recollect, what our Sentiments *then* were in relation to each of these Particulars.

To *begin* with what relates to the *Peace* of our *Jerusalem*: Was this, before happy, Country threaten'd by an avenging Providence with one of the *forest of GOD's Judgments*, the devouring Sword; to which He seem'd to have said in His Anger, "*Sword, go thro' that Land*"! Was every thoughtful Person ready, not with an unmanly Dread to anticipate, but with a cool Apprehension and humble Acquiescence in the *Divine Disposal* to prepare himself for, a *Return* of those Calamities, which our Fore-

^a On Sunday, *Obab.* 6. 1745. ^b *Ps.* CXXII. 6, 7, 8, 9.
^c *Ezek.* XIV. 17, 21.

fathers,

fathers, about a *Century* ago, severely felt from a *successful Rebellion*, a long Civil-War! When the *Palaces* of our *Princes*, and *venerable Seats* of our *Nobles* and *Honourable Men*, instead of exhibiting Scenes of Magnificence and Hospitality, were converted into Garrisons and Dens for Ravagers and Plunderers: When our *Ports* and *Cities* (among which this ancient and loyal one stood eminently distinguish'd) instead of flourishing with Commerce and improving in Manufactures, were fill'd with the frightful Images of Siege and Famine, of Slaughter and Desolation: When our *Universities*, those renown'd Seminaries for the Education of Youth in the Principles of Piety and Probity, and once secure Retreats for Men of Study and Learning, were *compass'd about with Armies*, and in Danger of having little *taught* in them besides the *Use of the Bow* and of the various Implements of Devastation: When our *Villages* saw their Husbandmen, instead of first ^a *bearing forth good Seed* and in proper Season coming again with Joy and bringing their *Sheaves* with them, now by a deplorable Reverse of the Prophecy ^b *beating their Plough-Shares into Swords and their Pruning-Hooks into Spears*: When in *private Families* the closest Tyes of Consanguinity were torn asunder, ^c *the Brother delivering up the Brother, and the Father the Child, and even Children rising up against their Parents and causing them to be put to Death*: In short, When War and Violence were become the Business and Profession, and seem'd to have incorpo-

^a Ps. CXXVI. 6. ^b Isaiah II. 4. ^c Matth. X. 21.

rated themselves, as it were, with the *Genius* of our People; among whom all Distinction of Station or Property was well-nigh lost, almost all Notions of Right and Wrong effaced, and scarce Spirit or Honesty enough left to cry out, ^a “*Oh, Thou Sword of the LORD, how long will it be e’er thou be quiet! Put up Thyself into Thy Scabbard, rest and be still!*—Was This, I say, the melancholy Prospect which lately presented itself to our Fears! How shou’d We ^b thank the LORD for giving us Warning of so tremendous an Evil, without suffering Us and our Country to be consumed by it: For so speedily, and yet (we trust) so effectually ^c scattering the People that delight in War; and restoring to this Nation, that most desirable of Temporal Blessings to any Nation, ^d the Blessing of PEACE!

Again: With Regard to the *Prosperity and Plenteousness of our Jerusalem*; the Possessions and Liberties of its Inhabitants, the Free-Course of its Laws, and the Excellency of its Civil Constitution of Government. Recollect what Your *Searchings of Heart* then were, when a *rapacious Army* had in an hostile Manner enter’d this Kingdom, had actually invaded the Properties of many of our Country Men, and made us ready to apply the following remarkable Description given by the Prophet; ^e *Lo, I will bring a Nation upon You from far, O House of Israel, saith the LORD; it is a mighty Nation, it is an ancient Nation:—Their*

^a Jer. XLVII. 6. ^b Ps. XVI. 7. ^c Ibid. LXVIII. 30.
^d Ibid. XXIX. 11. ^e Jer. V. 15, 16, 17.

Quiver is as an open Sepulchre; they are all mighty Men. And they shall eat up thine Harvest and thy Bread which thy Sons and thy Daughters shou'd eat: they shall eat up thy Flocks and thine Herds: they shall eat up thy Vines and thy Fig-Trees: they shall impoverish thy Fenced-Cities with the Sword. Call to Remembrance the Time, when Publick Credit was greatly endanger'd, and Trade and Commerce almost at a Stand; but especially that Juncture, when we were on one Side alarm'd by the Approach of lawless Rebels, and by Reports of merciless Invaders on the other. What Wasting and Destruction did we expect to see during the Contest, what Ruin to the entire Subsistence of numberless Families, shou'd either of these our Enemies be permitted only for a while to prosper: But shou'd either for our Sins finally prevail! how reasonably did we apprehend, that the Nation itself, from being a powerful Kingdom, might soon be degraded into a tributary Province: or at best, that our boasted (I wish I cou'd not say, abused) Liberties must presently fall a Sacrifice to uncontroll'd Oppression; our Laws be once more render'd precarious by a dissolving Power, and our Free-Holds (as we had been used to call them) thenceforward lye at the Mercy of arbitrary Will; whilst our regular Seats of Judgment shou'd no longer be open to receive our Complaints or redress our Wrongs. In short, Think how justly solicitous we then were for our envied Constitution, how unwilling to exchange it for any other Form of Government in the known World, and yet in what im-

minent Danger of being soon forced to exchange it for one of *the worst*!---And then tell me, What Praises are due to that Gracious Being, who so seasonably ^a removed far off from us the Northern Army: Who permitted the People of this Land to hear of, in part to feel, the Effects of their disappointed Rage, without giving us over for a Prey unto them: ^b Who deliver'd our King and his People from so great a Death, and doth deliver; in whom we trust that He will yet deliver us!

Once more: In regard to that *most interesting* Object of every good Man's, every real Patriot's, Concern, the *Publick Profession of true Religion*. --- Did our ^c Hearts lately tremble for the Ark of GOD, for that excellent Church into which we had been baptized, that pure Religion in the Light whereof we had, from the first Dawnings of our Reason, *rejoyced*? Were we earnestly solicitous to preserve the invaluable Advantages of *primitive Order, Decency, Purity*; yet unable to foretell, how soon we might be call'd upon to give them up, either for the wild Freaks of Enthusiasm and Fanaticism, or the Superstition and Idolatry of the *Romish* Ritual: Were You apprehensive (as well You might be) that, instead of the Liberty of daily Access to those *Sacred Volumes, the Holy Scriptures, which are able with such Helps as are now afforded You to make You wise unto Salvation*, You shou'd for the future be trusted only with ridiculous *Legends*, with idle Tales of *lying Wonders*, or with the abominable Ca-

^a Joel II. 20. ^b 2 Cor. I. 10. ^c 1 Sam. IV. 13.

suiftry of worfe-than-heathen *Jesuits*: That, instead of the sober, grave, intelligible, rational *Services* of the *English Liturgy*, You must soon be obliged to attend (I do not say, to *joyn in*) extatick Raptures and Idolatrous Adresses to *Angels* and *Saints*, often *falsely so called*, breath'd forth in a Language to You generally unknown: That, instead of those few, plain, easy, and at the same Time decent, significant, instructive *Ceremonies* with which You are now acquainted, Your Publick Worship must be clogg'd, and Your Devotion embarras'd, with a Multitude of *Fopperies*, at best *ridiculous*, in many Instances highly *sinful*: Or lastly, if Your own calm Resolutions, supported by *Divine Grace*, should embolden You to *protest* manfully and constantly against these and the like Abominations, after the Example of Your *Forefathers*, that You must, like them too, be thrust into *Dungeons*, or forced to *seek Your Bread in desolate Places*! --- What Holy Transports of Joy and Thankfulness to Almighty GOD may we not indulge ourselves in, especially on this Occasion; now that *a being delivered from the Hands of our Enemies*, we are not only permitted to *serve Him without Fear*, but invited by Authority to sing forth His Praises in the *Great Congregation*! now that we not only ourselves enjoy, but have the delightful Prospect of transmitting to the Ages after us, all the Advantages, that perhaps *merely human Wisdom* can provide, for *b Wor-*

a Luke I. 74. *b* Compare Psalm XCVI. 9. with Joh. IV. 24.

Shipping the LORD at once in the Beauty of Holiness, and in Spirit and in Truth.

But perhaps this Representation, if not of our *Fears*, however of our *real Danger*, may be thought to be carry'd too far. "No such Interruption was intended, at least for any Time, to the publick Peace; no such Violation of private Property; no such Alteration in the Laws of our Country, or the Profession of our Religion, as has been here supposed. The late Adventurer for the Crown of these Realms, had his *Pretensions* succeeded, wou'd (it seems) have continued our Civil Affairs, at least our *Religious* Establishment, on the same Footing on which they now stand, or perhaps have been graciously pleased to have placed them on a *better*."---But, my Brethren, *let no Man deceive You with vain Words*. Besides the Injury that must have been done by such a Change to our *Gracious Sovereign*, whose mild and just Government (to put it at the *lowest*) has, surely, *little deserved* such a Return from his *People*: Can any considerate Person perswade himself, that, in our present Situation, the late Invader of our Country cou'd have *peacefully* dispossest'd Him of His Throne, cou'd without numberless Acts of Violence have mounted into it, or cou'd without inconceivable Sacrifices of Blood and Treasure have kept himself in it? But the Consequences of a *merely secular* Kind I may leave to be explain'd by others in a more proper Place: nor indeed will the Time permit me to pursue at large *those* of an *higher* and more lasting Concern. Only thus much

I must have Leave to say, that *if ever* there was a *delusive* Imagination, *This* shou'd seem to be *one*,---That a Prince bred up in all the Bigottry of the *Church of Rome*, continually beset by its zealous Adherents, and supported by such *Allies* (rather let me say, *dictated to* by such *Masters*) as have never yet wanted Inclination to extirpate (what they call) the *Northern Heresy*, wou'd *at once* have become *disposed*, or if disposed wou'd have been *at Liberty*, to patronize, or so much as to protect, *THE Church of England*. A *Church of England*, indeed, he wou'd, no doubt, have used his utmost Efforts towards *effectually* patronizing among us: that is, *A Church*, which he wou'd have been most ready, as soon as he shou'd have found himself able, to *call by that Name*: But a *Church* in reality as different from that *now* so called, as *Darkness is from Light*; as *Superstition is from rational Devotion*; as *Idolatry is from Decency*; as a Spirit of *Persecution is from the Spirit of the Gospel*; as *the Yoke of Bondage is from that Liberty wherewith CHRIST hath made us Free*.

Upon the Whole then: If the *Peace*, the *Prosperity*, the very *Being* of our Country as a free *Protestant Nation*, be of any Concern with us; We may in some Degree estimate the *Importance* of the Deliverance lately wrought for us, and the *Reasonableness* of our *Thanksgiving* for it.--- But, after all, whether This Dispensation of Providence shall *continue* to be a *Blessing* to us, or shall *finally encrease our Con-*

^a Gal. V. 1.

demnation,

damnation, must in great Measure depend *upon ourselves*. Let us then go on to consider,

III. *Thirdly*, The *proper Method* of expressing our Thankfulness for our late Deliverance; And the *Influence* It ought to have on our future Conduct.

And here, that the Expressions of our Gratitude shou'd be as *Publick* and *National* as the Benefits that call for them are, is a Point which I need not insist on: The present Solemnity proceeds upon this Supposition; and Your Attendance in this Holy Place implies Your Assent to it. Nor will I doubt but that the *Sincerity* of Your Religious Acknowledgments has born some Proportion to the *Reality* and Greatness of the Blessings You have been acknowledging. But the Danger is, that our Thankfulness shou'd not prove equally *lasting* and *efficacious*; but that, as on former Occasions, after observing a Day in *singing Praises* to our Almighty Deliverer, we shou'd ^a *within a while* forget His Works, and no longer abide His Counsel: Not knowing, or not duly considering, that the Goodness of GOD leadeth Nations as well as single Persons to Repentance and Reformation; and that, upon a Recovery from any dangerous Disorder, our LORD's Caution is equally applicable to Both, ^b "Behold, Thou art made whole; sin no more, lest a worse Thing come unto Thee."

The Truth is, such *merely Occasional* Services to Almighty GOD as proceed no farther,

^a Psal. CVI. 12, 13. ^b Joh. V. 14.

by no means answer His gracious Purposes in requiring these Acknowledgments *at our Hands*. An All-perfect Being *needs* not our Thanks; nor can He receive any *real Accession* either to His Glory or His Happiness from our Praises. When therefore He vouchsafes to *accept* and even to demand, these feeble Essays of our Gratitude; He does This, partly as they are a *Tribute* justly due *to Him*, but chiefly that they may *improve in Us* a suitable *Temper* of Mind: A Temper, which shews itself far more certainly, and more acceptably, in Men's *Lives* than by their *Lips*: And which, in the present Case, must exert itself not only in a *general Reformation* of Manners, but particularly in *constant Endeavours* to *avert* Those Evils for the future from which we have for the present been *rescued*; and to *perpetuate* those Advantages, which have lately been so seasonably *preserved* to Us. And

First, Has a Gracious Providence once more given *Peace in our Borders*, when our dear Country seem'd ready to be laid-waste by that most dreadful of all Wars, War among *its own Inhabitants*? Among other Expressions of our Gratitude for so comprehensive a Blessing, let us remember to root out of our own Breasts those *a Lusts*, from whence, as from their Original Source, *come Wars and Fightings among us*; and let us, in their Stead, cultivate those *heaven-born Affections*, which are at once the Glory and Happiness of *Brethren dwelling together in Unity*.

a Jam. IV. 1.

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Long

Long have the People of This Nation been very unhappily divided by *Party-Distinctions* and Names of Reproach ; which too often fatally hinder *Men from being of one Mind in an House*, and *separate* those, whom both Duty and Interest call upon to be *chief Friends* : which are apt to occasion an entire *Confusion of Characters* among Men ; whilst all *real Merit* with its Attendant, *Reputation*, is, by each Party respectively, *confined* to Those of their own Denomination, and held by the strange Tenure of Loudness and Impetuosity for it. In this imperfect State of human Affairs and human Passions, *it cannot indeed be*, but *that Offences* of this Kind *will come* : But the present seems as promising a Season as can well be expected, if not for wholly extirpating this baneful *Root of Bitterness*, at least for checking the Growth of it. The Unanimity *lately* shewn throughout this Kingdom was confessedly of the utmost Importance to us all. Nor let it be supposed, that the like Harmony is *now* become either useless or impracticable. The *true* Interests of our *King* and our *Country* are certainly in themselves united : And, tho' some Diversity of Sentiments about the Methods of promoting them will ever *subsist* among such Creatures as Men, and will generally *appear* in a *free Country* : Yet surely, unless Men are *unreasonably* fond of their own Opinions, mere *Diversity* need not degenerate into *Strife*, nor *Zeal* always work itself up into *Rage* and *Fury*.
** Only by Pride cometh Contention ; but with the*

* Compare Prov. XIII. 10. with Chap. IX. 2.

*well-advised, the lowly, is Wisdom :---even That
^a Wisdom, which is from above ; which is first pure,
 then peaceable ; gentle, and easy to be entreated.*

If, however, Inconveniencies in this respect shou'd not *always* be prevented: If too many will still be more sollicitous for the Prevalence of their *own Schemes* than about the Promotion of the *general Good*: If Some will go on groundlessly suspecting, and thence needlessly disgusting, their well-disposed Neighbours ; whilst the ^b Words of Others grow *fierce because their Advice is not first had*, and their Country served *exactly* in their Way : If, in short, warm Zealots on all Sides will unnecessarily ^c *kindle a Fire and compass themselves about with Sparks* ; and, after walking in the Heat of their own Fire and in the Sparks that they have kindled, will chuse to lye down in Sorrow : Let each of us at least keep his own Heart with all Diligence ; guarding against the first Motions towards all such Vehemence in himself, and avoiding as much as possible the Contagion of it in others : Being well assured, that Nothing in this World can recompense the Loss of a Meek and Quiet Spirit ; which is not only a present Ornament and Blessing to every one that retaineth it, but a necessary Preparative for that peaceful Region, where the harsh Voice of Party shall not be heard ;—where Enmity and Discord shall have no Being. But,

Secondly, If we sincerely rejoyce at the late seasonable Rescue of the Persons and Properties of our Countrymen, and of the Liberties,

^a Jam. III. 17. ^b 2 Sam. XIX. 43. ^c Isai. L. 11.

Laws and Government of our Country ; Let our Thankfulness express itself in hearty Endeavours to contribute *our Share* towards the *Prosperity and Plenteousness* of our *Jerusalem*, by an *honest Industry* in our proper Stations ; without making *needless Excursions* from thence into the Provinces of others, particularly of those whom Providence hath set over us ; or
a Meddling with them that are given to Change.

How obvious soever it may seem, it can hardly be too often inculcated, that every Man's *immediate* Concern is the prudent Regulation of his own Conduct, the faithful Discharge of his own Duty. By the Behaviour of other Men, especially of Men in *exalted* Stations, no doubt, our *private* Interests may be *remotely*, and those of the *Publick* more *nearly*, affected : And I am neither supposing it *possible* for a true Lover of his Country to be *wholly insensible* of what relates to its Credit and Prosperity, nor that 'tis *always unlawful* to *declare* our *well-grounded* Sentiments concerning such Transactions. Yet still it shou'd be remember'd, that there is a *suitable Respect* due to *Authority* wheresoever plac'd, and more especially to that of the *supreme Magistrate* : Who, not only on Account of the *honourable Relation* in which He stands to GOD, but also as being our *Civil Parent*, may reasonably expect from us the same *sacred* Regard to his Person, the same *tender* Concern for his Reputation, the same Unwillingness *rashly* to receive unfavourable Impressions or to spread

unkind Reports, to which our *Natural Parents* are confessedly entitled. And after all, a *diligent Attendance* on the *Business* of a Man's *proper Calling* will *ordinarily* be found his best Method of expressing a *reasonable Affection* for his Country, and an excellent Preservative against *unreasonable Anxiety* about it.

Whether therefore our Superiors shall at all Times discharge *their* respective Offices to *our Satisfaction* or not ; be it our Care punctually to answer the Demands of *our own*. The Truth is, the Conduct of Persons at a Distance from us is a Point, about which we may be little qualify'd to judge ; and shou'd we proceed to pass Sentence, our Censures might probably be uncharitable, at best impertinent : But *our own Business* is what we both may and ought to be well acquainted with ; this therefore we may safely *study*, and in this we may usefully employ ourselves. And happy wou'd it be for the *whole Community*, were the Attention of its several Members thus regularly employ'd : happy for *each Member*, cou'd he be perswaded *thus* to confine his Industry to his own Affairs. *These* wou'd then be so carefully, and, by the Blessing of Providence, so successfully managed, that Men wou'd seldom find any Temptation *at Home* for endeavouring to disturb Settlements, or to throw Things into Confusion : They wou'd have little Leisure or Inclination for that *speaking Evil of Dignities*, or *those* undutiful *Murmurings* and *Complainings* against them, which are often so many *Steps* towards Sedition and Rebellion in the Persons themselves ;

selves; or however (as we have found by fatal Experience) may give *undesign'd* Encouragement to them in Others.

And let none of us think slightly of *Sedition* and *Rebellion*: which, unless *Principles themselves* are become liable to *Variation*, can never be consider'd as indifferent or *harmless* Things, by any *real Friend* to the social Interests of Mankind, any *sincere Professor* of the Religion of the Blessed JESUS, or any *true Son* of That Church, whose Honour it has ever been constantly to inculcate the Duty of *a Subjection to the higher Powers*. "Who these *higher Powers* are", surely cannot now be made a *Question*, after the *present Settlement* of the Crown has taken Place thro' so long a *Course* of Years, and has been over and over *recognized* (as it was at first *established*) by the *supreme Wisdom* of the Nation. Or, if *real Scruples* can remain with any in this Generation; even these, I presume, cou'd hardly justify *private Persons* in attempting by Violence and Bloodshed to *b remove Kings and set up Kings*: This Work the Almighty claims as a Branch of His *Prerogative*; and, as He needs not the Assistance of frail Mortals to enable Him to *finish* it, to Him, methinks, Men really scrupulous shou'd chuse to *leave* it, to be accomplish'd at His own Time and in His own Way. --- But as to *Others*, who have no *Scruples* of this Kind; who have acknowledged the Lawfulness of the establish'd Government, and for many Years enjoy'd great *Quietness* and Safety under it;

and who, if they have not been *farther obliged* by any *personal Favours*, have however been *unprovoked* by any *real Acts of Oppression or Tyranny* in the Course of a *long Reign*, any Violation of *private Property*, any Infraction of the Liberty, Laws, or *Justice of the Community*: For any *such Persons*, (especially if to all other Tyes of Gratitude and Duty they have added that *most awful one, the Oath of GOD*;) to take the *Sword* against their King and their Fellow-Subjects; to do *their Part* towards involving their Country in all the Calamities of an *intestine War*, and (in Case even of Success) towards entailing *Slavery* upon their Posterity: This surely must be a Proceeding --- of which I will only here say, I bless GOD that so few, comparatively speaking so *extremely few*, of those who call themselves *Englishmen*, stand chargeable with the *aggravated Guilt* of it.

Lastly; Has the good Providence of GOD once more interposed in the Protection of that *excellent Church* whereof we are Members, from the Dangers to which it appear'd lately expos'd? If our Thankfulness flow from a *just Value* for this Blessing, it will express itself in a *constant Watchfulness* for the Preservation of the same happy Constitution; in an *exemplary Attendance* on its Worship and its Ordinances; and, most of all, in an *Improvement answerable* to those Advantages, which we still enjoy by the Continuance of it.

As to our Adversaries of the Church of *Rome*, let our late Apprehensions inspire us, not with any Asperity against their Characters, or *Ran-*
cour

cour against their *Persons*, but yet with an irreconcilable *Aversion* to their *unchristian* Tenets, their *corrupt* and abominable Practices. Notwithstanding all their Artifices, notwithstanding any favourable Opinions we may *charitably* entertain of the Intentions of any particular *Members* of That Communion; be we well assured, that *the Rust* of Popery itself *hath not yet been altogether wiped away*. Of its Perfidy and untolerating Spirit we have * *recent* Instances in some *Neighbouring* Countries: And, if *we ourselves* have not seen, yet *our Fathers* have told us, some unpromising *Experiments* of its *tender Mercies* and its Method of keeping *Faith with Hereticks*, that have more than once been made in our own. And, ^a *after all that has formerly come upon us*, after all that we lately dreaded, for our *Evil Deeds*; seeing our GOD hath punished us less than our *Iniquities* deserve, and hath given us such a *Deliverance* as this: Should we again break His *Commandments* by joining with the People of these *Abominations*; What could we reasonably look for, but that He would be angry with us, 'till He should have consumed us, so that there should be no Remnant nor Escaping!

Far be it from us, at the same Time, to let our Zeal against *Popery* be, like that of its deluded Votaries for it, a *Zeal without Knowledge*. Yet such it most certainly will be, if our Detestation of a *corrupt Religion* terminate (as it is fatally apt to do) in an Indifference to-

* See a Tract lately Publish'd, intituled, *Popery always the Same*. Printed for J. Oliver. 1746. ^a *Ezra IX. 13, 14.*

wards all Religion ; if our ^a *Abhorrence of Idols* betray us into the *Commission of Sacrilege* ; if in reforming away *Abuses*, we wound the *Vitals*, of Christianity. Whilst we justly ridicule the legendary Accounts of *Popish Miracles*, let us carefully guard against all contemptuous Thoughts of those *truly wonderful Works*, concerning which we have all the *Evidence* that distant Facts can want or admit of, that they were *openly wrought* in the Sight of Multitudes, for *Purposes* highly *worthy of GOD* : Whilst We reject Those *spurious Articles* of Faith, which are unsupported by *Scripture* and are plain *Contradictions* both to our *Reason* and our *Senses* ; let us preserve a just Reverence for those *really Christian Doctrines*, which tho' they may and, from the Nature of their Objects, *must* in some respects *transcend* both, yet *contradict* neither. Let us not in so *undistinguishing* a Manner condemn the extravagant Claims of the *Papal Hierarchy* to an absolute *Dominion over the Faith*, and Tyranny over the Properties and Persons, of *CHRIST's Flock*, as to discard *all* such Superiority of *Order*, *all* such Regularity of *Ministration*, *all* such Authority of *Instruction*, and Power of spiritual *Discipline*, as He *really* left with His ^b *Apostles* to be transmitted to their Successors *unto the End of the World*. In short, Let no Friend to the *Reformation* give the *Romanists* the greatest Advantage they ever have against us, by vindicating our Separation from them *on such Principles* as, if regularly pursued, would not leave our Blessed

^a Rom. II. 22. ^b Matth. XXVIII. 20.

LORD any *visible Church*, any publick Profession of His Religion, upon Earth.

Above all; let our Thankfulness for the Preservation, and our Zeal for the Honour, of our Holy Religion shew itself by, that best Method of Expression, its *Influence* and Efficacy on our *Tempers* and our *Lives*. In vain shall we boast ourselves Members of the purest Church, if our Conversations and Manners are not at all purify'd by it: Little will it avail us, that the most edifying Instructions, the most heavenly Ordinances, have been continually open and easily accessible to us, if we remain unedify'd by the one, and but rarely attend or for Form's sake only *frequent* the other. Unreform'd Professors, tho' *no just* Objection, are in Fact a *Disgrace*, to the most happily reformed Profession of Christianity: And *better had it been for us not to have known* the Means of Grace which our excellent Church holds forth to us, if we continue *barren and unfruitful* under them; if we do not, in some Proportion to our Opportunities and Advantages, *a grow in Grace, and in the Knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus CHRIST.*

I am sensible, it is high Time that I shou'd here release You: And yet, I am unwilling to close this Discourse without subjoining one short but momentous, and, I trust, not wholly unsuitable Reflection, upon what has been said.

Among the several Articles of *Danger* which lately threaten'd our Country, I have all along consider'd, not only the *Civil Rights* of the Community, but the *Properties* of particular

Persons, as being nearly affected. And, 'tis certain, whilst Men live *in* this World, neither Reason nor Religion require them to live *wholly above* all Concern for the necessary Accommodations, or even the Comforts of it. Give me Leave however to say, that the Situation of Affairs, which we have been recollecting, has not had *all that Influence* upon our Minds that it is *fitted* to have, if it has not left upon them very lively *Impressions* of the Precariousness of all earthly Possessions, the Vanity of accumulating them, and the Danger of placing any Confidence in them.—To reflect (as, I suppose, Thousands must naturally have reflected) how suddenly the most Opulent, notwithstanding all their supposed *Securities*, might have been despoil'd of every Thing in this World; how the Man that cou'd say within himself, *"I am rich, and increased with Goods, and have Need of Nothing,"* might the next Hour have found himself *wretched and miserable and poor and naked!* ---Must not This make us *feel* the Propriety of the Expressions, (at the same Time exposing the Folly of the Practices) of *setting our Eyes on that which is NOT*, of *wearying ourselves for VERY VANITY*, of *trusting in UNCERTAIN Riches*; Must it not put us upon securing an Interest, if any such *can* be secured, absolutely out of the Reach of all such Casualties as here alarm our Fears? —Now, *such an Interest* our Holy Religion proposes to us all: And, I will only

^a Rev. III. 17. ^b Prov. XXIII. 5. ^c Hab. II. 13.
^d 1 Tim. VI. 17.

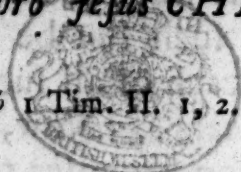
leave with You the following Advice of its Divine Author, at once for Your Direction and Your Comfort upon this Point :—^a *Lay not up for Yourselfes Treasures upon Earth; where Moth and Rust doth corrupt, and where Thieves break thro' and steal: But lay up for Yourselfes Treasures in Heaven; where neither Moth nor Rust doth corrupt, and where Thieves do not break thro' nor steal.*

May We all wisely make Choice of this Good Part which, when once obtain'd, shall not be taken away from Us! And, in the mean Time, May we ^b lead quiet and peaceable Lives in all Godliness and Honesty. To this End, Let our Supplications, Prayers and Intercessions be here added to our Giving of Thanks.

“Grant, O LORD, that All that are in Authority may, in their respective Capacities, conscientiously study to promote Thy Glory and the Good of Thy People. In an especial Manner bless and defend Thy Servant, our Sovereign, King GEORGE: Let His Throne be established in Righteousness, and on Himself and His Posterity let the Crown for ever flourish! ---And Grant that the Course of this World may be so peaceably order'd by Thy Governance, that Thy CHURCH may joyfully serve Thee in all Godly Quietness; thro' Jesus CHRIST our LORD. Amen.

^a Matth. VI. 19, 20.

^b 1 Tim. II. 1, 2.



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